

Chapter 3

Antebellum Pulaski County, 1833–1860

Generally settlement began with the valley lands, then the prairie margins were occupied, and later the open prairies, whereas most of the hillsides remain unimproved to this day.¹

As cabins and farms began to appear more frequently in Pulaski County between 1830 and 1860, a noticeable settlement pattern began to appear across the landscape. This pattern consisted of dispersed farmsteads and small hamlets concentrated along rivers and creeks. There was also a distinct settlement sequence. Homesteaders first built their futures along the rivers and hollows of the river valleys where the springs and choicest lands were found. As new settlers arrived they tended to settle near others, probably not so much as to have neighbors, but rather to get a share of those limited fertile acres. As time progressed, areas between clusters were filled with other valley homesteads. Once the valleys were well dotted with cabins and farms, then and only then, would new arrivals find good locations on the upland plateau between the two rivers where a good spring could be found. The filling in of the plateau region took some thirty years and even in 1860 there was plenty of room for additional settlers, although the best lands were gone. Both the settlement pattern and sequence had been established with Josiah Turpin's first neighbors.

Two homestead acts in the mid-nineteenth century assisted Missouri's settlement. One was the Preemption Act of 1841, which provided that a squatter could purchase 160 acres at a minimum price of approximately \$1.25 per acre, if he could provide evidence of cultivation. The other was the Graduation Act of 1854. This act reduced the price of slow-selling public land to a progressively cheaper price beginning at \$1.00 per acre and continually falling in price until after thirty years it could be obtained for as little as 12.5 cents. According to Gerard Schultz, the latter act "accomplished its purpose very well, for not only the poorer land but also thousands of acres of totally worthless stony hills were sold at the reduced rate."²

Naturally, the Graduation Act had the greater influence on settlement on the plateau between Roubidoux Creek and the Big Piney River. This is clearly seen by examining land acquisition on the plateau near Fort Leonard Wood. Figure 9 depicts antebellum land acquisition for the lands that now occupy the fort.³ The first land purchase in this area was in 1831, and throughout the 1830s land acquisition was confined to a few quarter sections along the Roubidoux and Big Piney. Even at the end of the 1840s, no lands on the upland plateau had been purchased and land in only a few additional quarter sections of the region had been purchased along the Roubidoux and Big Piney. As noted above, throughout this period, settlers clustered around the choice fertile lands along the river. The conclusion to be drawn here is that the 1841 act did not significantly affect land acquisition on the plateau. But in the 1850s, after the Graduation Act of 1854, the land purchase in the uplands was rapid, although not complete. In fact, a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database indicates that fifty-six percent of the land, or 38,920 acres, that is now part of Fort Leonard Wood was purchased in the 1850s. In 1860, another four percent of the land was acquired, so that at the beginning of the Civil War, sixty-six percent of the upland of Fort Leonard Wood had been acquired. There is little doubt that the rest of southern Pulaski County followed the same pattern. Of course, land purchases do not always indicate land occupation.

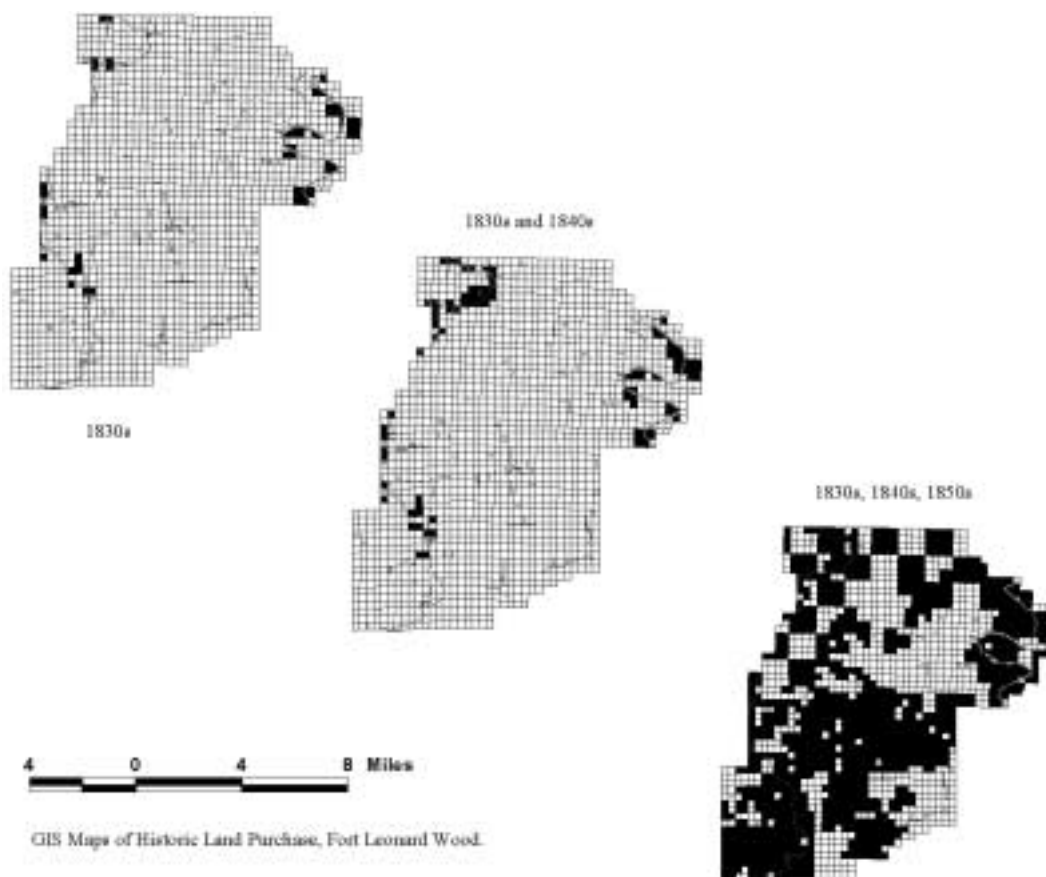


Figure 9. GIS maps of historic land purchase within Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri (SCIAA from data generated by Bennett et al. 1996).

It is likely that squatters and hunters were in the uplands before the 1850s. A good portion of the land entry dates for the 1850s are in 1854, so it is likely that some of these acquisitions were from people already settled there who were awaiting the opportunity to purchase the land after it had been surveyed. There may also have been a few speculators purchasing the land but not actually settling. But land speculation is not likely to have been significant.⁴ This was, after all, not prime farmland that was likely to increase in value. Overall, the maps are an accurate representation of the settlement pattern and sequence for this region and are likely representative of the pattern for the entire county.

Antebellum census figures (Appendix A, Table 1) verify the region's slow settlement. There appears to be a decline in county population, but this is the result of shrinking borders as new counties were formed from the original Pulaski County. In 1857 Pulaski County's borders were almost identical to those of today; the 1860 census provides the most accurate picture of settlement progress in southern Pulaski County. On the eve of the Civil War, there were only 3,835 people in the county and only 56 of those were African American. To put this in another perspective, this figure amounts to only 626 families, down from 642 families in 1850. As noted in Chapter 1, Pulaski County was at that time the least populated of the seventeen northern Ozark counties. And the population of southern Pulaski County was even smaller. "Between 1829 and 1840 there were no settlements outside of the valleys. After 1840 there was an occasional settler on the uplands, but the settlement continued to be sparse up to [Civil] war times, and centered more or less toward Waynesville, as the only town in the county."⁵ Sauer mentions that in the northwest corner of Pulaski County, the smaller prairies were entered early, or prior to 1840, but this was the only prairie land to settle at this time.⁶

Who were these persons who settled the land between the Roubidoux and the Big Piney, becoming the first citizens of Pulaski County? According to Fort Leonard Wood's GIS database, the first to purchase land within the Fort Leonard Wood borders was Henry Stuart, Jr., on May 20, 1831. His father purchased land the following year, on March 9, 1832. However, others arrived before Stuart, Sr. On November 5, 1831, Washington Smith settled along the Big Piney, and George Washington Hines settled on January 2, 1832. By the end of the 1830s, Amos Deer, George Gibson, Wilson Tilley, William S. Helm, Michael and James Stuart, George Carpenter, Richard and Jefferson Matthews, Alexander Young, William Bibb, Alfred Brownfield, Comfort McCourtney, Rowley Williams, Charles Finley, Bowling John Baker, Alfred McElroy, Midian Smith, and James and Isaac Robinson, had purchased lands on the Roubidoux and the Big Piney and in most cases were settled there along with their families. Their lands amounted to 2,120 acres or three percent of the land. During the 1840s another 1,920 acres or nearly another three percent of the land was acquired, still confined to the Roubidoux and Big Piney Valleys and their tributaries.

How many others were on the land at that time, possibly as squatters? Traditional historical sources provide settlers' names who are supposed to have arrived as early as the 1830s and 1840s but who do not appear in the State Land Office Records. Some of these may have settled beyond the present boundaries of Fort Leonard Wood, and are not found in the GIS database. Others were squatters, and thus there is no record of their land acquisition. They include the Macklin, Amon, Felix, and Lovel Deer families. Also, the Maxey, Hays, Morgan, Nelson, Colley, Saltsman, Meyers, Stanley, Howard, Humphres, Honsinger, Hamilton, Bell, and Newman families, and two other McCourtneys—Alex and William—are named in sources of Pulaski County history.⁷ There were probably a few others, but

between the land owners and those thought to be present by historians, the population of southern Pulaski County totaled only forty-five families by 1850.

It is important to observe, again, the homogeneity of these people. The names listed are decidedly Anglo-Saxon. These people were part of a tradition and ideology called the Upland South. Wholly associated with white people of English and northern European extraction, the Upland South culture originated among those Scots and English of the border region (with some Welsh additions) who were forced to Ulster, Ireland, and later migrated to America. The first of these to make it to America initially settled in western Virginia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Blending with Chesapeake Tidewater, German, and English traditions of southern Pennsylvania, this amalgamation resulted in an independent small farm owner/operator who relied on traditional solutions to everyday problems that affected the economic, social, and settlement systems. Although the people were an amalgamation of different northern European extractions, many of the distinctive ethnic attributes blended easily into a singular frontier culture as the people migrated west.⁸ The predominant ethnic group was the highly individualistic, lowland Scots and Scotch-Irish peoples who rapidly migrated down the Appalachian chain beginning as early as the 1720s.⁹ With the arrival of another flock of Scots highlanders, who were being forced from their lands from the 1760s to 1815, and who mixed with people of German extraction, they began to spread north through the woodlands of southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois; west through Kentucky and Tennessee; south through upper Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and to the Missouri Ozarks.¹⁰ With localized exceptions, the land they settled was remarkably similar—mountainous, forested, rolling, often rugged, with plentiful game, and marginal agricultural soils. The migration across the central portion of the eastern United States was equally rapid, and while widespread, there was a remarkable tendency to migrate along a generally straight line east to west, deviating north or south only as rivers, mountains, and trails channeled the flow. Thus, the vast majority of Pulaski County residents were from Tennessee; their fathers had come from Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina. The second most common state of origin was Kentucky, followed by Illinois.¹¹

Cultural geographer Milton Newton goes so far as to state that these people were “preadapted” for the topography and climate found in the upper heartland of eastern America. Newton defines preadaptation as “a set of traits possessed by a particular human society or part of that society giving that group competitive advantage in occupying a new environment.”¹² This preadaptation permitted them to occupy the vast eastern woodlands in only two to three generations between 1790 and 1840. Highly adaptable to any regional variation in the usually wooded landscape, and with only decimated Native American tribes in their way, they were practically free to roam westward at their convenience. Though Upland South people lacked the planter’s capital and labor resources, the abundant woodlands offered easily obtained building materials and food. The migration’s rapidity was spurred accordingly by the continuing need for woodlands resources like timber for building, game, and mast for their hogs.¹³ The infertile soils also caused them to move often. Fertilization was unknown, and fields were quickly exhausted. Finally, without capital they had no means to purchase the land they squatted on. When the government offered the land for sale, the easy solution was to move on. Farther west there was abundant free land and little government interference.

The family of modern Big Piney resident Napoleon Bonaparte “Boney” Ramsey was typical of these early settlers and their settlement progression from Virginia to Missouri, then to the Missouri River tributaries and eventually into the hills of southern Pulaski County.

My great-great-great grandfather was born in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1782 and came to St. Louis when it was French; that would have been in 1800. Just spreading out brought him west and going for free land—land he could get. And he started on the Gasconade River near Dixon, Missouri. His name was Marquis de Lafayette Ramsey. My great-grandfather’s name was James K. Polk. He was born right at the end of the term of James K. Polk as President. And he had a lot of land—and he had some land up here on the Big Piney River that he let his oldest son take over. And he gave my grandpa Ramsey, his son, about a 250-acre farm—where the golf course is now on Fort Leonard Wood.¹⁴

Upland South people were subsistence farmers in the true sense of the word. Nearly everything they made and ate was the result of their own labor. With little capital and few general stores locally available, few items were purchased. The local economy was primarily a barter system. The primary crop was corn. Other staples grown or gathered included tobacco, rye, flax, maple sugar, sorghum, beeswax, honey, barley, buckwheat, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, wool, and cotton. Hogs and a few cattle provided meat. Fruit was scarce. The predominance of subsistence agriculture as a way of life is indicated in the 1840 census of Pulaski County. From a total population of 6,529 men, women, and children, 2,065 were employed in agriculture and 111 in manufacturing and trades (these were primarily millers); all other occupations amounted to fewer than 100.

Census figures provide an overview of agricultural production in Pulaski County during the antebellum period (Appendix A, Tables 2 and 3). The figures do not include all the agricultural products grown, but rather those in greatest production. While it is difficult to analyze the rate of growth because the borders of Pulaski County continued to shrink during this time, the census figures do provide a measure of what the Pulaski County region was producing. As might be expected, corn and swine were the Ozark pioneers’ two staples. It is doubtful much of this was being exported beyond the county borders. Most crops were consumed by the farmer, or traded locally for goods and services.

The cornfields in the river valleys and hollows were not like those seen today. The pioneer farmer borrowed traditional techniques from the Native Americans, and retained them well into the twentieth century. Small patches of ground were cleared by tree deadening. Tree trunks were cut all the way around the tree and then the tree was left to die or was forced to die by using a deadening agent like lye soap. Then the corn was planted by hand in rows, with pole beans in between. Ozark native Ollie Elliot explains:

We’d put out 20 acres of corn. My mom would lay the rows out. All straight ones too. Then one of us kids come along and drop the corn. Generally, my older sister Mae would drop the corn. I’d come along with the beans. Yes, we planted pole beans at the same time. We’d plant two kernels of corn to a hill. Every time you’d make a stop, you’d plant two grains. You drop three, let it go; if you dropped four, you’d have to pick one of them up. Generally, we’d plant two bean seeds per hill. We didn’t want to ride the corn

down cuz we had to cut that, cut the corn. If you had two stalks of corn, you'd want two beans, at least two beans. When the corn got ready to cut, the beans would be ready to pick.¹⁵

Corn was often left in the fields until the first frost, when it could be easily broken from the stalk. Then it was picked as needed for the family, the horses, and the hogs.¹⁶ When the patches became unproductive, the cattle would be allowed to graze on it and a new patch was cleared. Higher up in the hollows the farmers would plant potatoes and sorghum. Farm tools were mostly homemade, with a blacksmith's help if one was available. The axe was the most critical all-purpose tool for chopping down trees and shaping the wood to build the log cabin. Plows were wooden, with iron tips. Harrows were made from tree limbs. Sickles were used for harvesting.

Cotton was rare in the Ozarks and was never grown as a cash crop. Pulaski County produced only 7,727 pounds of cotton in 1840. This might seem a lot, but assuming a 400-pound-per-bale average this would amount to only 19 bales. In 1860 the county produced 249 of the 400-pound bales. Still, cotton was grown only for farm use during most of the antebellum period. For the first settlers there simply was no easy way to get it to market. But even if there had been a market, fertile soils were too precious to devote to cotton, and as a crop it was too labor intensive. For the subsistence farmer it was also too risky. A ruined corn crop could be replanted or the hogs turned on it and the pigs fattened for market. A ruined cotton crop was "a total loss" and a disaster.¹⁷

Animals were easy to raise in this country, where good farmland was rare. Hogs, cattle, sheep, and horses roamed the woods and fields. The hogs fed on the abundant woodland mast, and the cattle and sheep grazed on the prairie and woodland grasses. Hogs and cattle roamed free. Horses were watched a little more closely. Oxen were used during these early years for cultivating the fields that were sometimes fenced against animals. The animals were usually earmarked and sometimes branded. Stock raising, in fact, became one of the more profitable Ozark agricultural pursuits and in the Pulaski County region. In the late nineteenth century, raising cattle was the "most profitable occupation." It would remain so among the successful farmers up until the arrival of the U.S. Army. The quality of Pulaski County stock has had mixed reviews though. Late nineteenth century county historian Goodspeed states that the cattle, mules, and hogs were of fine grade because the rugged hills kept them in excellent condition. Early twentieth century geographer Carl Sauer complained that the cattle were poor due to the open range method of raising them. Perhaps these discrepancies can be explained as a result of the changing landscape. Goodspeed was describing the early and late nineteenth century landscape in which the soils and vegetation were still abundant and fertile. Sauer was describing the beginnings of the landscape's overuse during the early twentieth century. Unforeseen by these early farmers, the valuable bluestem grasses of the prairies would be over-grazed, making cattle raising more difficult.¹⁸

Writing to a friend in Germany, Frederick Seines described the typical 1830s Missouri farm in Franklin County. His letter provides an accurate portrait of Pulaski County farms also:

Instead of a house you must think of a hut, behind it a still smaller hut for a smokehouse, further back a still smaller hut for other purposes. All this is surrounded by a zigzag rail fence. Sometimes a spring flows right thru the yard.... There is no trace of domesticated fruit trees, no garden shrubs, grape vines, or tame flowers. Instead of a garden, such as you

know, simply a plowed, fenced-in, little plot of ground, which in the early spring can scarcely be found on account of the weeds. There are no barns with threshing floors in them. Sometimes the grain stays out in the fields all winter long in stacks. The grain is not beaten out but trampled out by animals. The grain is laid on the ground in the field, on a place cleared of stubble and weeds, and then horses or cattle are driven over it till the kernels are tramped out of the ears.¹⁹

The hut Seines described was the log cabin, the most common settler abode from Josiah Turpin's time until the late nineteenth century, and remaining the home of the poor through the mid-twentieth century in southern Pulaski County. These were horizontal log houses of one room, with the cracks filled with clay daubing or "chinking." At one end of the cabin a chimney was built, the base of stone and the upper of logs and clay. Windows were rare at this time, and it would have been an exceptional home to have paned glass. More often greased rawhide was used to cover the window and admit some diffused light. Most often there was no window at all. Civil War trooper Lyman G. Bennett of the 36th Illinois Infantry described the cabins in the area just west of Waynesville: "One characteristic of nearly all the log cabins on the road, they are all without windows and the door must be opened in order to admit light. The cracks between the logs are generally window enough for all practical purposes."²⁰ The more industrious built a two-penned cabin joined with a single roof. Between the two cabins a covered open space was used as a porch. This was the famous "dogtrot" house still occasionally seen today in the rural south from Virginia to Georgia and west to Missouri and even east Texas (Figure 10). Interestingly, recent oral historical research has indicated that at least in the Appalachians, families living in dogtrot



Figure 10. Twentieth century dogtrot in the cornfields of Pulaski County, Missouri (courtesy John F. Bradbury Postcard Collection).

often did their living on one side, and reserved the other “parlor” for sleeping, and special occasions like visitors, dances, and funerals.²¹ There is no reason to doubt that the two-room dogtrot was used in a similar way in the Ozarks.

Inside the cabin, activities around the hearth continued to be oriented toward food processing and equipment repair as they had during Turpin’s time and would continue, largely unchanged, until well after the Civil War. Perhaps a few more furnishings could be seen in the homesteader’s cabin by the middle and late antebellum periods, like candlesticks, kettles, irons, forks, metal spoons, ceramic plates, earthenware crocks, glass tumblers and bottles, chairs, beds, and perhaps a chest or storage box.

Through the antebellum period two separate kinds of agriculturists developed in the county, and were fairly well defined in the Fort Leonard Wood region by the 1860s. The first was the subsistence farmer. Subsistence farmers were somewhat like the early hunters in their farm economy, devoting much of their time to hunting and gathering. But they also dedicated a good portion of their day to growing and tending crops. The subsistence farmers usually came as squatters and often remained as squatters even after the lands were for sale. If they had the means or became successful, they would purchase a few acres around their homesteads, but they also might just wait and see if somebody came to claim the land. They were extremely flexible in making a living; whatever the woods seasonally provided for their family was their current employment, and trade allowed them to acquire whatever else they needed. They hunted, trapped, fished, bartered, and grew a little cotton for clothing, corn for feeding the family and the livestock, and tobacco for trading and as a medicine. In Pulaski County, tie hacking—cutting the oaks for railroad ties—was one method of obtaining cash for those items they could not make or grow, but this cottage industry would not fully bloom until after the Civil War. The number of acres cleared for farming would remain small. When the soil was worn out, more land would be cleared from the nearby woodland. The land would be handed down to the next generation if the land was owned. In southern Pulaski County, subsistence farming probably was seen more often in the uplands as opposed to the river valleys. As will be seen, subsistence farming in southern Pulaski County continued up until the U.S. Army purchased the land.

Arriving in the county at the same time as the subsistence farmers were the pioneer agriculturists. As defined here, the pioneer agriculturists were those who arrived with the full intention of farming as a full-time occupation—that is, in raising a cash crop. They also were interested in creating and participating in a market economy. Probably the majority of such people settled in northern Pulaski County during the antebellum period. However, some settled in the more fertile valleys of the county’s southern portion along the Roubidoux and Big Piney. Pioneer agriculturists often brought some means of wealth with them and purchased larger tracts of farmland. Perhaps some of their land was purchased on speculation. They were entrepreneurs, and, if possible, would find additional means of increasing their wealth, as opposed to simply subsisting. They built the mills, opened the general stores, provided the impetus for the formation of local government, and often ran for local office. They opened law offices in town. Some began as subsistence farmers and became successful pioneer farmers because they arrived early enough or were able to find and purchase a small fertile plot. Pioneer agriculturists would eventually become the local upper class, economically, and their sons would become general agriculturists in the late nineteenth century if they rebuilt after the Civil War.

It is important to note that this loose hierarchal system was extremely fluid in an expanding, open pioneer society. That is, one could move from subsistence farmer to pioneer agriculturist and back as fortunes changed. Also both "classes" were flexible in building or maintaining wealth. David Waldo was one such pioneer who came to the county during the antebellum period, and his life is illustrative of the diversified character of the frontier agricultural economy and the two agricultural types in the Missouri Ozarks. Before Waldo died, he was at one time a practicing physician, postmaster, major in the militia, circuit court clerk, ex-officio recorder of deeds, county court clerk, justice of the peace, deputy sheriff, and acting coroner for Gasconade County. Although ending life in the pioneer upper class, he began destined, like many young men on the Missouri frontier, for a subsistence living. But being an enterprising sort, in 1826 he cut and hauled timber until he had enough to build a raft, which he and some hired hands then floated down the Gasconade to St. Louis. In St. Louis, he sold the lumber for \$500.00. He took his money and traveled to Lexington, Kentucky, where he enrolled at Transylvania University. His professional training as a doctor consisted of one winter of attending lectures and he then returned to Gasconade County as Dr. Waldo, practicing physician.²² With the demand for such skills high at that time, probably few people questioned his credentials or abilities in the medical field. But he must have had some success because he remained in the region throughout his life, employed in the various occupations listed. Although not every entrepreneur in the Ozarks was as enterprising, Dr. Waldo's diverse interests and employments, and the abundant opportunities on the Missouri frontier, were not unusual during the antebellum period.

Whether subsistence farmer or pioneer agriculturist, life during the antebellum period was rugged and the Ozarks' poor land made it more difficult. Few records are available, but a surviving letter from Hiram and Sarah Welch, to their relatives in Illinois, testifies to the harsh frontier in Pulaski County region (original spelling maintained):

December 20, 1839

Dear Brothers and Sisters

I take this opportunity to let you now that we are well at this time hoping these lines find you in the same health....We was jest two weeks from the time we left Illinois tell we go to James Haney. We found him & family all with the ager. every one of them had it. tha [?] took it in august, he was much dissatisfid & he sold out to move back but he took a notion to tri it a little longer. I was goin to come with him. He has moved a bout 18 miles furdur & tha say his timber is scase. He is in a prarie holler....James Haney sed that tha was more than two thirds of the papel her was sick this fall. Ther is a heap of sickness her. I am living on a place belongs to old John Wisdom. I shell sta her & mak a crop, ther is about [illegible] acres fenced & turned. I git it for doing some work on the place....

I shall not parswade no boddy to move here. When ther is land it is good range and tolerbel plenty of game. I have cild three deer and a good miney turkeys. Timber is skace her, black post oke is the groath mostly som white jack oke and black oke but timber is scase. rocks a plenty. James Ewton lives about ten miles from me on the river gasknad. I live in a prairie holler My nearest nebour is about two miles on the other side about ate miles. It is on the hardys place I ever seen. Pork is worth from four to five dollars corn is from twenty to thirty cents per bushel wheat is from fifty to seventy five cents per bushel. Tha have bin three or four snows and is now a sleeting. One snow was

about ten inches deep. It has been very disagreeable winter so far. While I was riting tha fell a snow about ate inches deep...Thar ar places here to settel som very good ones if a boddy could have ther helth.²³

Besides subsistence and pioneer farming, and those trades necessary to a frontier existence like blacksmithing, store keeping, and public office, there were only a few other occupations in Pulaski County during the antebellum period. The 1840 census indicates that there were two individuals in mining, twenty-four in commerce, 111 in manufacturing, twenty-three in navigation of canals, lakes, and rivers, and eighteen listed as in the learned professions and engineers. Many of those counted among the manufacturers were millers. Census figures include twenty-two grist and flour mills in Pulaski County in 1840, but at that time the county was about three times its present size. One of the most famous Pulaski County mills was built during this time. Tennessean Joseph Strain built his Gasconade Mill in 1840 along the river by that same name. This mill, still standing, is today known as the Schlicht Mill after its third owner, John Schlicht, who purchased it in 1876. The number of mills serving the Roubidoux and Big Piney regions probably did not increase greatly between those built before 1830 and the Civil War, but at least four mills were built at this time that had a significant effect on the lives of those who would settle on the plateau between the two rivers before the Civil War. The first of these was G.W. Gibson's mill built in 1831 or 1832. Gibson settled along the lower Roubidoux a few miles from its mouth in 1826 at what became Waynesville, Missouri—the only village in antebellum Pulaski County. Along the Roubidoux, Cook's Mill was built perhaps as early as 1845.²⁴ This mill would eventually lead to the little hamlet of Cookville. Across the uplands on the Big Piney, Stone Mill was built sometime in the 1840s. Just downstream and around a huge bend in the river, Comfort McCartney arrived in the 1830s and purchased fifty-three acres in 1838. His family would soon join him. Sometime before the Civil War, he built another mill. The valley would forever be known as McCartney's Hollow and the family name would become infamous to the Federals during the Civil War.²⁵ Demonstrating the critical importance of springs to these early settlements, both Stone Mill and McCartney's Mill were built where springs refreshed the Big Piney's waters.

Like the mills of the earliest Missouri settlers in the 1820s, mills built between 1830 and 1860 were more often than not multifunctional, especially in isolated regions like Pulaski County. Changing from grinding to cutting was relatively simple, the power train remained the same and a system of gears or belts drove the millstone or saw blade. They were not only multifunctional, they were attractions, drawing other small enterprises necessary to frontier existence. Typical was a mill on Spring Creek near Relfe, in nearby Phelps County. A memoranda book includes charges for milling flour and meal, carding cotton, purchase of ploughs, and "making 1 pr shoes for mother."²⁶ In other words, the mill remained a community center or central place during the antebellum period where goods were purchased, services were performed, items traded, and news exchanged.

During the middle antebellum period, commercial mills were established and devoted to the growing lumber industry. The Gasconade lumber industry that had started in the 1830s was considerable and healthy by 1840. The census taker indicates that there were fifteen sawmills in the county in 1840, counted separately from twenty-two gristmills. It is clear that the fifteen sawmills were industrial-level operations devoted exclusively to full-time conversion of timber into lumber for St. Louis, rather than toward serving the needs

of the local community. This accounts for the 111 people listed as being in “manufacturing” in the census as they were full-time lumbermen. These mills produced lumber valued at \$25,000 in 1840. By 1852, local farmers cutting their own timber for local use and the Gasconade Valley timber industry had cut most of the good timber along the river.²⁷ Meanwhile, along the Big Piney, large gaps of cleared timberlands also were visible by the 1850s.

Besides millers shaping the timber into lumber, and farmers cutting timber for homes, there were professional raftsmen. Those twenty-three listed in the 1840 census as river “navigators” were obviously raftsmen. The rivers provided a convenient and practical method of transporting lumber to the mills or to buyers. The river trades also promoted a way of life and folklore reminiscent of the Ohio River flatboat men. Trees were cut and logs were transported to a mill that would rough-out the logs (roughly shape them into ties), or they would be roughed-out in the woods when cut. The logs were then tied together into rafts and floated down the river. Maneuvering the logs around the twisting bends of the Big Piney and Gasconade Rivers was quite a challenge and accomplished by pulling on grape vines and by using poles to push the rafts. When and if they reached St. Louis, the men sold the timber, bought a few new clothes and plenty of whiskey, and walked home. Rafting was a dangerous occupation, and the rafters became famous for their daring and risk taking. Along with this hard life, came hard living, fighting, and drinking, and a legendary lifestyle.²⁸ Following the Civil War, with the railroads’ insatiable appetite for ties, tie-hacking (cutting and shaping ties from trees), and rafting became the essence of local folklore. For the young men of Pulaski County, this lifestyle undoubtedly looked more exciting and rewarding than eking out a living on a marginally productive farm.

The area’s isolation was not only suited to frontier Tennesseans who were seasoned to the subsistence hunting and farming lifestyle, but also to those “desperadoes and outlaws” who chose a life outside the law. Northern Ozark folklore and history is full of stories about outlaws, bandits, and during the Civil War, bushwhackers. Even today, locals agree that it is not uncommon to find people on society’s fringes—the homeless and criminals—hiding in the caves around Pulaski County. One of the great local antebellum legends concerns a counterfeiting band, the “Bank of Niangua.” Like all legends, the facts are difficult to discern from the lore. However, legend has it that a group of counterfeiters opened shop in the caves north of Waynesville around 1832 or 1833. This group consisted of four men, Spencer, Quillen, Garland, and Tellis, and a woman named Stennett (or sometimes called Stinson). The group was caught. Quillen and Garland were imprisoned. But this did not stop the presses; in fact, it only angered the others engaged in that sort of chicanery. Soon another murdering band of robbers and counterfeiters, led by John Avy, was operating in the same region. Eventually, local citizens tired of the violence formed a vigilante group called “Slickers,” that attempted to break up the gang. The violence between the two factions came to be called the Slicker War and it continued for several years. The war finally was brought to an end when a popular young man was murdered by Avy’s gang, and the Slickers believed that the local sheriff, connected to Avy, let the prisoner get away. Incensed, the Slickers took up arms and eventually two of Avy’s gang were killed. The others were driven from the region.²⁹

Another version of the legend relates that the Bank of Niangua was broken up when a widow of one of the dead gang members stopped getting her cut (perhaps she is being

confused with the Stennett gang member noted above). In any case, the bank was so well organized it had a board of directors, which shared the profits, and her late husband had been a board member. Angry at being left out, she went to St. Louis and contacted federal officials who rooted out the gang. Regardless of the details, these stories illustrate this frontier region's isolation and wildness, where lawful authorities had only a slim hold on order, and if one sought justice, it was common and even expected that it would come through direct personal action.³⁰



The only communication with the outside world at this time was via the settlement and supply routes leading into the southern Pulaski County region. The very earliest transportation and settlement routes were the rivers, especially the Gasconade, Big Piney, and possibly Roubidoux Creek in Pulaski County. However, these water routes are twisting, bending streams, with many dangerous shoals that become very shallow in dry seasons. Although these waterways were useful for rafting lumber and for small jon boats, large river craft such as steamboats and flatboats could not navigate these streams. In other words, even though they were usable for slipping timber downstream, they were poor market and trade routes. This severely handicapped the development of large-scale agriculture within the Fort Leonard Wood area, even if the local soils would have allowed it. Due to the unreliability of the rivers, roads quickly overtook the rivers in importance as transportation routes in and out of the region. Even for the timber industry, the rivers were only seasonably available and some of the earliest roads in the northern Ozarks led to the sawmills in the Gasconade valley. Again, it was the landscape that dictated the course and progress of regional settlement and transportation.

The earliest road of any consequence that crossed the land between the Roubidoux and the Big Piney was the east-and-west-running animal path or Indian trail that Dustisné followed into the Ozark interior. As stated earlier, this trail, with many subtle changes from its original twisting, turning route, became the main artery for Pulaski County trade and travel in the nineteenth century, and remains so even today, as its modern shadow is Interstate 44. Throughout the road's nineteenth century history it was known under a variety of names like the Old Indian Trail, the Kickapoo Trail (1830s), the Old Wire Road, or Old Springfield Road.³¹ From a modern perspective it is best described as the interior ridge route, for it generally follows the ridgelines from one river drainage to another from St. Louis to Springfield, Missouri. South of St. Louis it trails along the ridgeline between the Meramec and Missouri Rivers. It eventually crosses the Meramec and then rises to the ridgeline between the Meramec and the Bourbeuse River, which it follows until it crosses the Gasconade west of Waynesville, Missouri, and rises again to follow a broad ridge between the Gasconade and the Osage.³² Tradition has it that even Josiah Turpin followed this route to Pulaski County instead of ascending the Gasconade, and most certainly the majority of those who followed him entered the county along its main path.³³ As settlers entered the Fort Leonard Wood region along this path, they would turn south when they reached the Big Piney or Roubidoux to find their new homes.

But it was not settlers' wagons that turned the Indian path into a well-rutted road by the mid-1820s. It was traders' wagons. Traders like Joseph Philibert, who, on his way west to trade with the Indians, traveled the road (Missouri Highway 8) from Farmington in St. Francois County to where it joined the interior road around Rolla. By the 1830s

the traders would stop at Massey's Iron works, then push on to Little Piney, and then to Waynesville. From that point, traders went up the Gasconade to the mouth of the Osage Fork.³⁴ At this same time the mails from St. Louis were also operating along the route, following the ridgeline to Rolla and then to Waynesville. As population increased westward, the last mail stop was Rolla, and then it became the Little Piney Post Office (at the mouth of the Little Piney Creek). Waynesville was the main Pulaski County stop once George Gibbons opened his general store.³⁵ "By 1858 [the Wire or Springfield Road] had become the most important route of travel and freighting through Crawford, Phelps, Pulaski and Laclede counties." In 1860, a tri-weekly stagecoach ran along this route, taking two days to run from St. James, Missouri to Springfield.³⁶

It was along this route that the few Waynesville citizens and the even fewer citizens in the Fort Leonard Wood region witnessed the tragedy of the Trail of Tears. This story begins farther east in northern Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee where the Cherokees had watched their lands being usurped by white settlers through the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. After many broken treaties, misunderstandings, and the unstoppable intrusion of white settlers, in 1838 the Cherokees were ordered off their lands and forced to move to lands set aside in Oklahoma. In May of that year the Cherokee were placed under military rule of the United States Army. From May until July, some 15,000 were rounded up and taken to embarkation camps. There they waited out the summer sickly season until October when they began their long march west. By the time they reached Oklahoma, at least 2,000 had died in embarkation camps, and another 1,500 on the road—mostly children and old folk.³⁷

For the journey the Cherokees were divided into groups of around 1,000, each lead by a detachment of soldiers. Some of these contingents left their homelands for Nashville, Tennessee, from whence they began their trek westward. From Nashville, they made their way to Marion, Kentucky, crossed the Ohio and Mississippi, and arrived in Missouri near Cape Girardeau. From Cape Girardeau, they marched to Farmington, Missouri, along a path that generally followed Missouri Route 8, passing Massey's Iron Works, to Rolla where they picked up the interior road. Then they followed the now well-worn path to Little Piney, across the plateau, and on December 9th encamped at Waynesville where the weather was "extremely cold."³⁸

The trip was brutal, and conditions were exacerbated by freezing temperatures and poor roads. Most walked beside their wagons, which constantly broke down. Eventually they would become a long trail of stragglers. They were almost constantly on the move, making upward of twenty miles a day. But sometimes river crossings cost them dearly and they would make only a mile or two. There was little rest. When stopped, the army would issue corn and fodder, and occasionally bacon. In the evenings the Indian men would drink, attempting to ease their sorrow and pain. Life and death played out along the trail. The day previous to their arrival at Waynesville, the Cherokees buried Nancy Big Bear's grandchild.³⁹ A few days later a child was born to another family. Overall, there was more death than new life.

There are only a few eyewitness accounts of the event from the Waynesville and Fort Leonard Wood region. How local settlers reacted to this saga is largely unknown. But the few records that do exist indicate that Pulaski County settlers had the full range of human reactions from sympathy to hatred. For instance, W. I. I. Morrow, a physician attending the Indians, wrote that local resident "Jas. Harrison ... a mean man—will not let any person connected with the emigration stay with him," but finds "Col. Swinks—a genteel man, &

pretty wife & quite familiar.” He also recorded the landscape around Little Piney as “a broken poor country except on the river—Narrow rich bottoms, a sickly mean country.”⁴⁰

Perhaps there was more sympathy for the Cherokees among the local population than animosity. As Upland South peoples migrated west into Missouri, they had adopted not only the Native American subsistence lifestyle, they also intermarried with the Native Americans. By the time of the Trail of Tears, many local homesteaders were of mixed blood, although few would have admitted it. Some of this intermixing also occurred as a result of earlier fugitive Native American groups passing the area on their retreat west. As noted, the Missouri Ozarks was a “dumping ground” for eastern bands of Native Americans even before the War of 1812. Lands west of Missouri were used to settle Native Americans before the Cherokee. Later, in 1832, a band of about 220 Seneca and Shawnees from Ohio passed through Missouri on their way to the Neosho River in Indian Territory. Although their exact route is not clear, they entered Missouri in Ste. Genevieve County and crossed the Meramec River and the Gasconade before heading southward to the White River. It is possible that they followed the old Kickapoo Trail, as that is what the interior road was called through Pulaski County and beyond.⁴¹ Today, it is not uncommon to hear of Native American ancestry among southern Pulaski County residents. Longtime resident Virgil Shelden’s great-grandfather, Delancy Shelden, was a volunteer in the Ohio Infantry. “Lo and behold, he captured one of them Indians, married her, and brought her back here. She was Creek.” During the Trail of Tears, some Native Americans even may have found safety and refuge among the local population. Shelden noted that another branch of his family may have adopted one of the Cherokee:

Now my grandfather, Joe Ross, he was just as brown as a piece of branch. John Ross was a Cherokee Chief. John Ross was a Cherokee Chief when the Trail of Tears was coming through. I think John Ross was my grandfather’s grandfather. I was forbidden to even talk about that around my old aunts. Now there was more Indian blood in this county than you’d think, right around Hooker, Pulaski County. Yes, the older generation. Them old Cherokees were being herded across country. They were pretty well-educated. They could talk our language too. They’d a lot of them here around that have Indian blood.⁴²

Thus it was that the interior ridge road not only brought new homesteaders to the region, and supplies to those already there, it also had facilitated an intermixing of cultures that affected northern Ozark culture.

While the interior ridge road was the only well-trod path across the county during the antebellum period, there were other less-trod paths that local citizens traversed to get to Waynesville, to mills, or to other small villages outside the county, like Houston to the south of Pulaski County. The primary and best regional map depicting the antebellum transportation system is a geological map published in 1873 from information gathered in the 1850s. This map was made at the time because a plan was being discussed to cut a railroad line through the county in the late 1850s, but the war brought a stop to it. Superimposed on a copy of this map is a series of roads that are believed to be close to or similar to the major road system in the late 1850s (Figure 11).⁴³ It indicates the interior ridge road, by then called the Springfield road, running across the plateau between the Big Piney and the

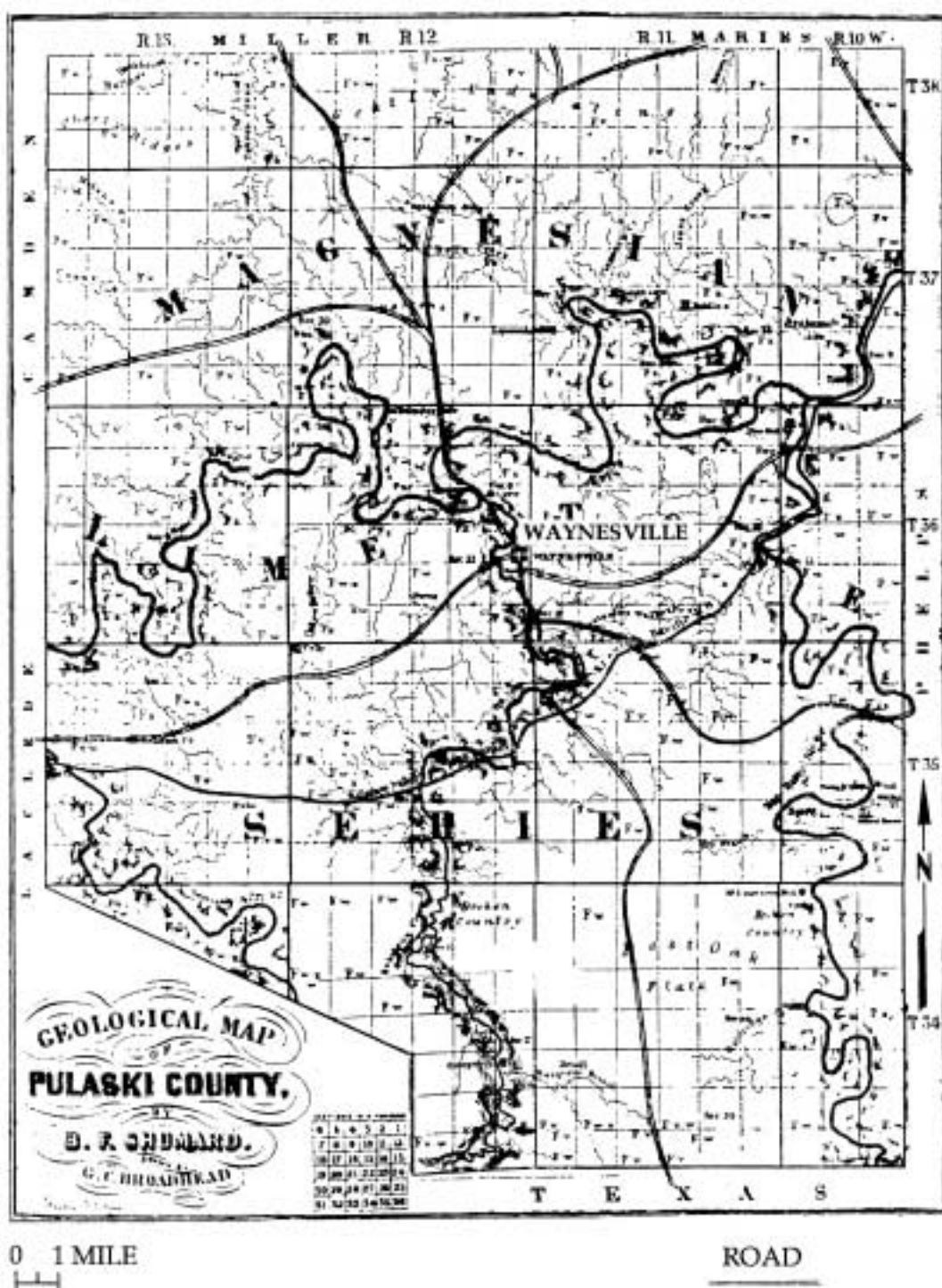


Figure 11. Broadhead geological map of 1873 with roads superimposed (Mottaz 1960:X1).

Roubidoux to Waynesville and points west. Running north out of Waynesville is a road that crosses the Gasconade and then splits three ways—west, north, and east. At least one of these roads was the old road that Indian traders used in the 1820s to get to the Indians on the Osage River. Another road, either the one heading east or north, is the road that was called the “old salt road” because it used by a Mr. William Moore to haul salt to Jefferson City and Stark’s Ford. The road split may have been the result of an act of Congress in 1836, which established a mail route from Jefferson City to Waynesville. Another postal route ran from “the county seat of Morgan to the county seat of Pulaski” and on to Pettis County. To reach both Jefferson City and Morgan County from Waynesville, both roads would have had to exist, one branch going north to Jefferson City and another going west to Morgan and Pettis Counties.⁴⁴

Running south out of Waynesville was another trail that led to Houston in Texas County. This road follows the plateau’s ridgeline between the Roubidoux and Big Piney. It would serve as the main route for Fort Leonard Wood settlers in the 1850s. It would become the main north-south thoroughfare for the land between the two rivers from that time on and come to be called the “old Houston road” and later Highway 17.⁴⁵

These roads were hardly roads in any real sense. They were dirt trails, rutted by wagons in some cases, but in others simply paths of cleared vegetation. Less traveled trails were mere suggestions, branching, splitting, and reforming as a result of travelers in wagons, on horses, or on foot, finding their way across the open uplands. Once trails became rutted from wagon wheels, the rains turned them into muddy quagmires, full of deep ruts and jutting rocks. Hard rains made them impossible to traverse, and thus in rainy seasons, the settler was confined to his homestead, cut off even from Waynesville. In an attempt to improve Missouri roads, the legislature approved an act as early as 1817 to require all able-bodied men between sixteen and forty-five and residents for ninety days to work on the roads. However, no funds were authorized to assist this work, and little was actually accomplished by these work teams, as their meetings became social events, a time for the men to gather, drink, and gossip.⁴⁶

Across the open upland plateau people made their own roads when necessary and when it was dry. This is illustrated on a General Land Office map of T35N, R11W dated 1845 (Figure 12). A road is depicted on this map that runs across the Roubidoux to the Big Piney and is labeled as such. This road is also illustrated on the geologic map (Figure 11). This road came to be called the Old Spring Creek Road, named for Spring Creek village located across the Big Piney. It eventually became part of the old Houston Road sometime by the 1860s. At that time it branched off in a couple of different directions and one branch even joined a road labeled “State road from Springfield to Massey’s Iron Works.” Possibly, these branches led to squatters’ cabins. Further, the road labeled “state road to Massey’s Iron Works” would lead one to believe it was part of the interior ridge road, although the road is usually depicted as running several miles north of where it is drawn here. But quite possibly it was simply another branch of the winding, twisting, bifurcating interior ridge road that bypassed Waynesville and rejoined the main trail farther on. It is also interesting that this road is similar to the railroad line proposed in the 1850s and may be the result of survey and roadbed work for the planned railroad.

Schultz notes that the earliest roads across the interior were to assist the lumber industry, and one of these was ordered to be built to the Patrick Cullen and Company mills on

the Gasconade as early as 1821. This road crossed the Gasconade at Little Piney and it may be seen on the geologic map in the upper right corner. Farther south, another road not illustrated was built in 1822 to Daniel M. Boone's mill.⁴⁷

Significantly, the insulation of the rolling plateau that is now Fort Leonard Wood might have ended at that time had the Civil War not occurred. Plans and surveys were being made in the 1850s to bring the railroad through southern Pulaski County to Springfield. The route shown on the geological map indicates that the rails would have followed the Gasconade out of Little Piney and as it entered Pulaski County near a little post stop called Pine Bluff, it would have cut south across the plateau and crossed the Roubidoux south of Waynesville. By December 1860 the railroad had reached Rolla, Missouri.⁴⁸ Also by that time Irish and German laborers were working on the railroad bed and digging a tunnel in what is now known as Tunnel Hollow near the north gate of Fort Leonard Wood. Legend has it that many Irish laborers died from disease and were buried in a mass grave near the post gate along modern Route 17. Irish laborers who survived railroad construction later settled along Irish Bend or Haley Bend, near the county's southeast corner, and also along the Big Piney. Whether or not the legend is true, the 1860 census lists at least forty men living in a boarding house in Waynesville and several Waynesville homes with boarders. While the majority of these laborers were born in Ireland, others came from northern European duchies and cities like Hesse, Saxony, Prussia, and Baden. The Civil War stopped the railroad's completion and when the effort was revived during the postbellum period, the new line, briefly named the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad and eventually named the St. Louis and San Francisco, was rerouted through northern Pulaski County, bypassing the land between the Roubidoux and the Big Piney—changing the pattern of county settlement forever.



Throughout the Antebellum period, Waynesville was the only village of any size in the entire county. (There were stage stops named Pine Bluff, Greenville, Colly, and Bellefonte along the interior road by 1864, but they do not warrant notation on most contemporary maps.) Waynesville developed early as the county's central node of regional commerce and government because of its strategic location. At the bottom of a "deep mountain gorge, with high rocky bluffs," it was near a spring and it was where Dutisné's old Indian trail crossed the Roubidoux.⁴⁹ The earliest hunters and travelers along that trail had found it a convenient place to stop and it became a natural pioneer campground. A mill was built there as early as 1826 and a homesteader named G. W. Gibson settled there between 1831 and 1832. Shortly thereafter, a blacksmith shop was established at the mill. Being on the main road and the only hamlet in the region, it was logical that it was chosen as the county seat in 1833. The following year the village of Waynesville was laid out. As the mail route had always followed the interior road out of St. Louis and merged with the trail Dustisné forged, Waynesville was the logical choice for a regional post office and Robert B. Hammon established a post office a year later.⁵⁰ Through the 1830s the town continued to grow, and in 1835 James Bates built a store. Other pioneers, already homesteading in the region, moved into Waynesville, including William Moore and E. J. Christeson.⁵¹ In 1840 the first courthouse was built and in 1843 the state Legislature passed an act recognizing Waynesville as the official county seat. In that same year a brick courthouse was built—the first brick building in the county, forty by twenty-eight feet, twenty-two feet high, with three rooms, two halls, and two outside doors. As this was probably the only large struc-

ture in the county at that time, an 1855 court order allowed the courthouse to be used for “...exercise of religious worship, at any time when there are no legal proceedings in progress in said house, to all denominations who believe in the doctrine set forth in the holy scriptures,” but “... a ball or dancing party, or exhibitory show, ... shall pay ... \$2.50 in advance.”⁵²

By the Civil War, Waynesville had several houses and the center of business had long since shifted from the ferry and mill in the Roubidoux floodplain to the brick courthouse higher on the river terrace. This upper terrace land was donated by William Moore and Elijah Christeson, and Waynesville was platted in 1839, named after Revolutionary War hero General “Mad Anthony” Wayne. Through the 1840s and 1850s various stores were constructed and arranged around the courthouse in a typical courthouse square. By 1860, Waynesville boasted 104 residents, including six slaves. Census information gives an idea of the kind of commerce being carried on in the village. There were one merchant, two grocers, four clerks, three blacksmiths, a doctor, a wagon maker, and an attorney. Other residents were laborers, farmers, and a stonemason. On the eve of the Civil War, W.W. McDonald built a double-pen long inn on the east side of the courthouse square, which became the stagecoach stop, inn, and tavern. Amazingly, McDonald’s hotel survived the Civil War and still survives today (Figure 13).⁵³

Although Waynesville became the hub of government and commerce for Pulaski County, it was unimpressive to northerners and other outsiders. Civil War Sergeant Benjamin F. McIntyre with the 19th Iowa Infantry described the village with little favor:



Figure 13. Old stagecoach stop, Waynesville, ca. 1900 (courtesy Pulaski County Historical Society).

Waynesville is one of those necessary little towns which are needed in certain counties as a place for horse racing, quarrels & fights and where bad whiskey and poor tobacco is offered for sale at reasonable prices for approved credit or country produce.⁵⁴

Another Federal soldier had similar opinions of Waynesville and the quality of Missouri's frontier education. Captain Chester Barner of the 19th Iowa wrote in his diary that Waynesville was:

a small village containing fourteen houses. ... This town was remarkable for having in it a "school house," the only institution of the kind we had yet met within the State. The enterprising projector of such a novel scheme in that region of the country must have found it rather an unprofitable investment, for from its appearance it was then mortgaged to a flock of sheep, which had evidently occupied it unmolested for a long time. There was a post office, too, in that flourishing place, or rather had been, but as mails were like 'angels visits' the enterprising postmaster had now converted it into a whisky shop and tavern, and was doing a thriving business.⁵⁵

Lyman Bennett of the 36th Illinois Infantry was more concise in his depiction of the little hamlet, calling it a "miserable apology for a village," and a "sorry looking place."⁵⁶

While Yankee memories of the flower of antebellum Pulaski County are less than flattering, there were few other places people could gather for supplies, mail, and community activities. There was not much else outside of Waynesville. For instance, the census records indicate that there were only fifty-five wooden buildings in Pulaski County in 1840 and no brick buildings. As late as 1850, there were only 630 dwellings and 642 families in the entire county, let alone in the Fort Leonard Wood region. Most of the wooden buildings listed in the census must have been mills and perhaps a few trading centers. Mills could serve pioneer settlers as far as twenty miles away according to one historian, but that sort of travel would have been impossible regularly, considering the state of Ozark roads. This explains why there were at least three mills serving those few residents in the fort region by this time.⁵⁷ Other central places that define communities are the post stops. By 1837 there were at least three post stops in the greater Pulaski County area. These were Cave Spring, Onyx, and the Waynesville Courthouse. Only Waynesville would have been close enough to serve the settlers living in the region that is now Fort Leonard Wood. Still, there had been a post office at Little Piney from at least 1833, and there was a stop at a place called Plato in Texas County south of Pulaski in 1855. There was also a post office at Relfe in Phelps County east of Pulaski in 1847.⁵⁸ These locations indicate that besides the mills and Waynesville, there were few but a variety of trading centers within a band of some ten miles surrounding southern Pulaski County by the Civil War. On the plateau between the Roubidoux and the Big Piney, there was only the hamlet of Big Piney, organized around a church sometime in the late 1840s. In fact the hamlet may have been only a house and church.

The initial frontier settlers organized the economic aspects of their communities around stores and mills. In Pulaski County, Waynesville was settled and grew because of its strategic location first as a mill and trade center and then as a seat of government. But when settlers looked to build communities for social support, they looked to churches and schools. On the frontier, a single building was often built by the local community to serve both needs. Before there was a community to associate with, the earliest settlers worshipped in

their homes and a circuit rider became a welcome sight. A circuit rider in the antebellum period often meant a camp meeting that was a good excuse for interaction between normally widely dispersed neighbors. Other times the circuit rider visited privately with a family. Even for the nonbeliever, a circuit rider was welcomed for news he carried, as much as for his “good news,” since there was no newspaper in the county until 1871.

The Baptists were the first to organize and build a church in the southern Pulaski County region, and that omnipresent civic leader Elijah Christeson was again in the forefront of community organization, building a church in 1832.⁵⁹ In 1834, Primitive Baptists organized along the Big Piney, and in 1837 they sponsored the fourth annual meeting of the Little Piney United Baptist Association at the “Big Piney Meeting house.” In 1846, the Baptists held their annual meeting again at the Big Piney Church (as it was now called) and had thirty-two people enrolled in the various local churches belonging to the Association. Missionary Baptists came in the 1850s and built a church in Smith Hollow. Meanwhile, the Methodists held their first service in the homes of Wilson Tilley and Josiah Turpin around 1833–34.⁶⁰

Education, like religion, took place primarily in the homes of the earliest settlers. A formal education was not considered necessary to many Ozark pioneers, even though a public school act had been passed in Missouri in 1839. As one old gentleman (aged 108 in 1920) said during an interview, “In those days, education was not such a necessity that people felt constrained to force it upon their children.”⁶¹ Still, others avidly sought school for their children and when someone with an education came along, they were often asked to tutor privately in the home or through subscription. These early educators are only known today by their names. One was a man named Richard Addison. Another was “old man Spencer” who taught somewhere along the Roubidoux before 1840. Waynesville attempted to open the Waynesville Academy in 1857, but nothing came of the effort immediately, and then the war came. But despite resistance or indifference, a county school system did develop. In 1840 the census lists six schools in the county, and in 1850 there were five schools with as many teachers. On the eve of the Civil War some 1,199 children were enrolled in Pulaski County schools, organized into twenty-five school districts, twenty-six schools, taught by twenty-six teachers who were paid \$25.00 a month.⁶²



In a particularly rough, rolling part of the Ozarks, three twisting shallow, rapid running streams—the Gasconade, Big Piney, and Roubidoux—formed a region of sharp environmental contrasts. In the river valleys were heavy stands of oak, and on the rough hillsides cut by intermittent streams were stands of yellow and white pine, oaks, hickory, sycamore, and other tree varieties. The uplands consisted of woodlands and open prairies. The woodlands were composed mostly of post and pin oaks. The open prairies were covered with bluestem grasses, which were maintained by Native Americans to increase the forage and habitat for deer and other game species. The river valleys, hillsides, and prairies were full of game, and prior to the arrival of Americans, the region had been used primarily for hunting by Native Americans.

Between 1800 and 1860, American hunters, lumbermen, and settlers trickled into this region and began a slow alteration of the landscape. It began with cutting the timber. Very

early in the antebellum period, the wooded valleys and hillsides began to be cleared of lumber for St. Louis. By the 1850s, the demand for lumber had cleared the Gasconade River valley, and large gaps were exposed along the Big Piney River and Roubidoux Creek, especially far upstream on the Big Piney in Texas County. Meanwhile, settlers arrived in a steady but slow trickle, until the 1850s when the pulse of settlement quickened. Prior to that time settlement focused in the narrow river valleys and up hollows along the river valleys. Patches of valleys were cleared for fields and on the nearby hillsides could be seen the settlers' cabins and occasional outbuildings. But after 1854 the new settlers chose the cheap, less fertile lands up on the plateau, and began to purchase this land.

Very quickly, the rivers proved to be an obstacle to commerce and settlement, and trails became more numerous, running across the plateau to the river valleys where the grist and lumber mills supported the few settlers. One road in particular, known as the "old interior road," cut the plateau from east to west. By the 1850s it was a regular route of traders, stages, and mails. Off this road ran smaller trails to the settlements in the woodlands and valleys. Perhaps by this time in the woodlands hunting became just a little more challenging as the population grew. As time passed, travelers were more and more likely to encounter hogs, cattle, and horses. Toward the end of the antebellum period it even became more difficult to travel because people were burning the underbrush less often.

Throughout the antebellum period there was only one area of this land between the rivers where settlement even remotely concentrated. This was Waynesville, where a small town was built around a courthouse, and downhill along the Roubidoux a mill had been built initiating the development of the town. There were a few other areas where roads and trails led to tiny hamlets. On both rivers, Cook's Mill and McCourtney's Mill were operating by the end of the antebellum period, and people in the local region would go to them to trade for supplies at the store run by the miller. In a little clearing on the plateau was a group of buildings known locally as Big Piney. Over the years between 1830 and 1860, neighbors grew closer as more people settled the area, but the land between the two rivers remained sparsely settled and would continue so.

But despite the sparse settlement and isolation caused by bad roads and twisting rivers, there must have been a great deal of optimism in the region. From the perspective of the Turpins, the Christesons, and other founding families seeking to develop a thriving antebellum community, Pulaski County in the 1850s was taking on the trappings of civilization with county development—a little village, mills, churches, and schools. It was still a frontier, and it was best to be cautious about strangers met along the road or the river, yet many of the bandits of earlier times had been expelled from the region. The landscape was not pristine, but there was plenty of timber to cut, game to hunt, and land to clear. The railroad was coming, too, and this was sure to end the transportation and isolation problems and bring prosperity and opportunity, especially to the plateau in southern Pulaski County. Certainly small rail stops would have been built and possibly development would shift from Waynesville to that region. Instead, the 1860s would bring the Civil War and ruin.

The patterns of settlement on the regional landscape were established by the end of the antebellum period and would not change until a large section of the plateau was purchased by the U.S. Army in the 1940s. The pattern was of dispersed settlement along river valleys, and even wider disbursement of cabins on the plateau along a few trails. The main routes into, out of, and across the plateau were already in place and would not change dra-

matically until the late nineteenth century. Until the twentieth century, they would not change significantly in condition. The main route led across the plateau, not to it, and would be followed by many settlers traveling down its bumpy ruts. They would move farther west and south to the Springfield region. The other roads led to central nodes of trade and commerce, at first the mills, and later Waynesville. The cultural aspects of this landscape were also set and immovable. The early pioneers were overwhelmingly from Tennessee and Kentucky. Their fathers had come from the piedmont areas of North and South Carolina, and Virginia. They were white, Protestant, and most were without deep financial pockets. They came with what few material items they owned and lived off the bounty of the woodland landscape. They brought with them an independence and self-reliance that has yet to leave the Ozark consciousness. Because of the Ozarks' isolation and a certain stubbornness of its people, many pioneer cottage industries continued throughout the nineteenth century. Growing and spinning cotton for clothing, and the use of homemade farm equipment continued to be seen here long after they had died out in other Missouri regions.

Notes for Chapter 3

- 1 Sauer, *Geography of the Ozark Highland*, p. 156.
- 2 Schultz, *Early History of the Northern Ozarks*, p. 47.
- 3 The maps were generated using a Geographic Information System. Using this system, land patents from the Missouri State Land Office records were digitized for computer manipulation. Names and dates of purchase were input into a compatible program that allowed the user to point to a location on a computer map and see the name of the land owner and purchase date, see W.J. Bennett, William Isenberger, Jeffery Blakely, John Northrip, Robert A. Dunn, Clay Mathers, and Frederick L. Briuer, *A GIS Pilot Study for Euro-American Cultural Resources: Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri*, prepared for the U.S. Army Engineer Center and Fort Leonard Wood (Nashville, Arkansas and Vicksburg, Mississippi: Archaeological Assessments, Inc., and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterways Experiment Station, 1996).
- 4 Bennett, et al., *GIS Pilot Study*, p. 17, indicates the likelihood of preemption claims for this area is "very remote."
- 5 Goodspeed Publishing, *History of Laclede, etc.*, pp. 106, 111.
- 6 Sauer, *Geography of the Ozark Highland*, p. 157.
- 7 Goodspeed Publishing, *History of Laclede, etc.*, p. 106; Turpin, *Our Ancestors*, iii.
- 8 The Upland South as a cultural area was first identified by Frederick Jackson Turner in his still debated book, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1920). But it was Henry Glassie who defined Upland South architectural traditions, and Milton Newton, both of Louisiana State University, who defined its settlement patterns, geographical extent, and some of its cultural aspects. Many scholars have questioned Newton's definitions and the origins of the Upland South. Terry G. Jordan and Matti Kaups, for instance, provide solid evidence that the origin of the log cabin belongs to the Finns in the Delaware Valley, rather than the Scotch-Irish, and that some Upland South traditions were learned from Native Americans. They do admit that it was the Scotch-Irish who carried the traditions down the Appalachian Mountains. Others question the borders or extent of the Upland or Upper South, which has been defined as broadly as covering the entire east-central woodlands of the United States. Robert D. Mitchell correctly points out that from a geographical perspective, Upland South culture was not a homogeneous group but was lumpy and regionally diverse. However, while it was indeed regionally diverse, culturally it was a blend of very similar traditions and solutions to everyday

- problems on the frontier. Furthermore, Mitchell was examining the eighteenth century Appalachian backcountry when Upland South Culture was at its beginnings. By the time these people reached the Ozarks, they had well-developed and successful living traditions over two or three generations, and were quite adaptable to the Ozarks. Thus they remain unchanged in the isolated Ozarks. For the most recent discussion of the Upland South, see Robert D. Mitchell, "The Southern Backcountry: A Geographical House Divided," in *The Southern Colonial Backcountry*, edited by David C. Crass, Steven D. Smith, Martha A. Zierden, and Richard D. Brooks (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1998). See also Charles H. Faulkner, "'Here are Frame Houses and Brick Chimneys': Knoxville, Tennessee, in the Late Eighteenth Century," same volume. For other discussions and definitions of the Upland South, see Terry G. Jordan and Matti Kaups, *The American Backwoods Frontier: an Ethnic and Ecological Interpretation* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1987); Russel L. Gerlach, "The Ozark Scotch-Irish: The Subconscious Persistence of an Ethnic Culture," *Pioneer America Society Transactions* 7(1984): 47–57; Fred B. Kniffen, "To Know the Land and Its People," *Landscape* 9 (1960) 3: 20–23; Fred B. Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 55 (1965) 4: 549–575; Milton Newton, Jr., "The Annual Round in the Upland South: The Synchronization of Man and Nature Through Culture," *Pioneer America* 3 (1971) 2: 63–73; Milton Newton, Jr., "Cultural Preadaptation and the Upland South," *Man and Cultural Heritage, Geoscience and Man*, edited by H.J. Walker and W.G. Haag Volume 5 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1974); Douglas K. Meyer, "Diffusion of Upland South Folk Housing to the Shawnee Hills of Southern Illinois," *Pioneer America* 7 (1975) 2: 56–66.
- 9 While the term "Scots-Irish" is more technically correct, common usage of "Scotch-Irish" has become acceptable, see Jordan and Kaups, *The American Backwoods Frontier*. By predominant, it is not meant that the Scotch-Irish were superior, or even always the majority population in any one region of the Upland South. Again, there was regional and ethnic diversity throughout the Upland South. But the Scotch-Irish were, more often than not, in the van of this migration after the American Revolution. However, even this is controversial as some scholars question that the Scots or Scotch-Irish remained a distinct group by the time they got to the Ozarks, see W.K. McNeil, *Ozark Country*, Folklife in the South Series, William Lynwood Montell, General Editor (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995) pp. 14–15.
 - 10 Some 52,000 Scots left for North America during this time, see Paul Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern World Society 1815–1830* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991) p. 220.
 - 11 Russel L. Gerlach, *Settlement Patterns in Missouri*, p. 70.
 - 12 Newton, "Cultural Preadaptation," p. 152.
 - 13 John Solomon Otto and Nain Estelle Anderson, "The Diffusion of Upland South Folk," *Southeastern Geographer* 22 (1982): 89–98.
 - 14 N.B. Ramsey, interview by Alex Primm, October 18, 1997.
 - 15 Ollie Elliott, interview by Alex Primm, June 23–24, 1996.
 - 16 John Solomon Otto and Augustus Marion Burns III, "Traditional Agricultural Practices in the Arkansas Highlands," *Journal of American Folklore* 94 (1988) 372: 166–187.
 - 17 Thad Sitton, *Backwoodsmen: Stockmen and Hunters Along a Big Thicket River Valley* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), p. 69.
 - 18 Goodspeed Publishing, *History of Laclede, etc.*, p. 98; Sauer, *Geography of the Ozark Highland*, pp. 160–161.
 - 19 Schultz, *Early History of the Northern Ozarks*, pp. 118–119.
 - 20 Diary of Lyman G. Bennett, December 1861 to April 1862, R. 274, Folder 4 (Rolla: on file, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri).
 - 21 Michael Ann Williams, *Homeplace, The Social Use and Meaning of the Folk Dwelling in Southwestern North Carolina* (Athens: The University of Georgia, 1991), pp. 79–81.

- 22 Sauer, *Geography of the Ozark Highland*, p. 132.
- 23 Welsh Family Letters, 1839–1854, File R391 (Rolla: on file, Western Historical Manuscript Collections, University of Missouri). The Welsh family must have settled on one of the prairie areas of the Ozarks, away from the pine timber that was valuable during this time.
- 24 William Lawrence York and Eula V. York, *Forty-'Leven: Stories About Forty-'Leven People* (Republic, Missouri: Western Publishing Co., 1975), p. 163.
- 25 Jan Primas and Terry Primas, *The Old Stagecoach Stop Story* (Waynesville, Missouri: Old Stage Coach Stop Foundation, 1998), p. 5.
- 26 Memoranda Book of Samuel Ledgerwood, 1851–1852 (Rolla: on file, Western Historical Manuscript Collections). It is possible that this mill is Stone Mill Spring. Stone Mill probably was named for a Mr. Stone, but the mouth of Spring Creek on the Big Piney is just upstream of Stone Mill Spring.
- 27 Sauer, *Geography of the Ozark Highland*, p. 153.
- 28 Arthur, *Backwoodsmen*.
- 29 James B. King, “Bank of Niangua Linked to Counterfeit Money,” *Old Settlers Gazette*, Volume 1 (Waynesville, Missouri: KLPW Radio, 1983) p. 15; J.W. Vincent, “The Slicker War and its Consequences,” *Missouri Historical Review* 7 (1913)3: 138–145.
- 30 Wetmore, *Gazetteer of Missouri*, pp. 152–154.
- 31 Writers Program, *Missouri: A Guide to the “Show Me” State*, Works Progress Administration and the Missouri State Highway Department (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1941), p. 417.
- 32 John Bradbury, *Mastodons to Motorcars*, videotape (Waynesville, Missouri: LEAP Productions, 1992).
- 33 Turpin, “Josiah Turpin,” p. 2.
- 34 Lynn Morrow, “Trader William Gillis and Delaware Migration in Southern Misosuri,” *Missouri Historical Review* Volume 75 (1981) 2: 147–167.
- 35 Wetmore, *Gazetteer of Missouri*, p. 278.
- 36 Schultz, *Early History of the Northern Ozarks*, pp. 104, 115.
- 37 William G. McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees: Evan and John B. Jones* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 171–202.
- 38 B.B. Cannon, “An Overland Journey West (October — December 1837)” *Journal of Cherokee Studies* Volume 3 (1978)3: 166–173.
- 39 Cannon, “An Overland Journey West,” p. 172. Cannon places the time as winter of 1837, as does Floyd C. Shoemaker, but McLoughlin places it as 1838 as do most modern accounts. McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, p. 171 mentions that some 2,000 Cherokee of the pro-removal party made an earlier migration, but it is not clear whether Cannon’s trip was part of this voluntary journey. See Floyd C. Shoemaker, “The Cherokee ‘Trail of Tears’ Across Missouri,” *Missouri Historical Review* 47 (1952–53): 124–130.
- 40 W. I. I. Morrow Journal, W.I.I. Morrow Collection, February 24, March 1839, Folder 2051 (Columbia: on file, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri), p. 3.
- 41 David W. Eaton, “Echos of Indian Emigration,” *Missouri Historical Review* 8 (1913–1914):93–99.
- 42 Virgil Shelden, interview by Alex Primm, June 24, 1996. Primm found eight of thirty informants mention Native American ancestry, “Historic Settler Communities, Oral History,” manuscript on file, Environmental Office, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.
- 43 The geologic base map was produced by the Bureau of Geology and Mines, which was closed during the war; thus, although the data was gathered in the 1850s the map was not published until the Bureau reopened. It is not known when the roads were superimposed on the map, but the existence of some of these roads is supported by other regional maps and therefore it is believed that most, if not all, the roads depicted were in existence during the antebellum period; see C.G. Broadhead, F.B. Meek, B.F. Shumard, *Reports on the Geological Survey*, pp. preface and

- Chapter XIII; Mottaz, *Lest We Forget*; R.A. Campbell, *Campbell's New Atlas of Missouri With Descriptions Historical, Scientific, and Statistical* (St. Louis: S. Augustus Mitchell, Philadelphia, 1873).
- 44 Wetmore, *Gazetteer of Missouri*, pp. 277–278.
- 45 Pearl Brown Wilson, “Wharton Store and Post Office” (Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri: on file, U.S. Army Engineering Center).
- 46 Schultz, *Early History of the Northern Ozarks*, p. 101.
- 47 Ibid., 102.
- 48 Goodspeed Publishing, *History of Laclede, etc.*, p. 119; Broadhead et. al., *Reports on the Geological Survey*; G. C. Swallow, *Geological Report of the Country Along the Line of the South-Western Branch of the Pacific Railroad, State of Missouri* (St Louis: George Knapp and Co., 1859).
- 49 “Jeff,” Letter to the *Iowa City Republican*, November 19, 1862, quoted in Primas and Primas, *Old Stagecoach Stop*, p. 24.
- 50 Schultz, *Missouri Post Offices*, p. 55.
- 51 Arthur Paul Moser, “A Directory of Towns, Villages, and Hamlets Past and Present of Pulaski County, Missouri” (Richland, Missouri: on file, Kinderhook Regional Library, 1973), p. 10.
- 52 Goodspeed Publishing, *History of Laclede, etc.*, pp. 114–116.
- 53 Bradbury, *Mastodons to Motorcars*, video; Primas and Primas, *Old Stagecoach Stop*, p. 6.
- 54 Nannie M. Tilley, editor, *Federals on the Frontier: The Diary of Benjamin F. McIntyre, 1862–1864* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963), p. 14.
- 55 Chester Barney, *Recollections of Field Service with the Twentieth Iowa Infantry Volunteers* (Davenport, Iowa, 1865), p. 42.
- 56 Diary of Lyman G. Bennett.
- 57 Evans, “Merchant Gristmills and Communities,” p. 320.
- 58 Schultz, *Missouri Post Offices*, pp. 32, 43, 45; Wetmore, *Gazetteer of Missouri*, p. 275.
- 59 Douglas Ensminger (compiler), *Handbook for Community Organizers and County Social Workers in Pulaski County*, The Missouri Relief and Reconstruction Commission, Columbia, Missouri (Columbia: on file, Missouri State Historical Society, University of Missouri, 1934), p. 9. Turpin, *Our Ancestors*, p. v, also mentions that the Primitive Baptists built a church house “in the Wayman settlement,” in 1831 and that this was located just outside the northeast boundary of modern Fort Leonard Wood. There is no other record of this congregation.
- 60 Minutes of the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Little Piney United Baptists Association (Rolla: on file, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, 1837); Minutes of the Little Piney Regular Baptists Association (Rolla: on file, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, 1846); Lucy Routt Bradford Duncan, “Early Days,” p. 102; Ensminger, *Handbook*, p. 9.
- 61 Frederick Liesman, “Pulaski County Super-Centenarian Contrasts Pioneer Days With the Present Era,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 17, 1920 (St. Louis: clipping on file, Missouri Historical Society).
- 62 Ensminger, *Handbook*, p. 11; Mottaz, *Lest We Forget*, pp. 26, 28; Pulaski County Historical Society, *Pictures-Stories-History of Pulaski County Rural Schools* (Waynesville: Pulaski County Historical Society, on file, Kinderhook Regional Library, 1990), p. 1.

